

Activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on peace operations for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2019

A/74/305 (Part II)

**Statement to the Fifth Committee by the
Under Secretary General for Internal Oversight Services
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4 May 2019**

Mr. Chairman, distinguished Members of the Fifth Committee,

I am pleased to introduce the report on the Activities of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on peace operations for the period from 1 January to 31 December 2019 (A/74/305 Part II).

This report provides an overview of the Office’s work in the areas of internal audit, investigations, and inspection and evaluation. Throughout the period, in every aspect of our work, the Office has strived to improve work methods, processes and methodologies to ensure our combined efforts provide the best “value for money” – to borrow a phrase often used in auditing. We continued to refine our risk-based planning process to better leverage the results of the Organization-wide risk register, and we harnessed internal experience and resources to impart skills training to OIOS staff as well as to colleagues in other areas of the Secretariat.

OIOS staff serving the United Nations across 15 duty stations contributed to this report by ensuring the delivery of timely results that aim to improve internal controls, accountability mechanisms and organizational efficiency and effectiveness. In total, the Office issued 242 oversight reports related to peace operations in 2019. These reports included 574 recommendations, six of which were classified as critical to the Organization. The Office faced no impediments in the delivery of its mandate.

While this report highlights only selected oversight results, as per resolution 69/253, full copies of internal audit and evaluation reports are available on the OIOS website. It must also be stressed that over the five years since the passing of this resolution, this policy continues to enhance transparency by providing better insight into the operations and the work of the Secretariat, and this report demonstrates the quality, breadth, and depth of the Office's work.

During the reporting period, the Internal Audit Division continued to enhance the quality of its work and its performance auditing approach, focusing on the efficiency and effectiveness of programmes, systems, and processes. The Division strengthened its capacity to identify fraud indicators and complemented its procurement fraud auditing practice guide with a new module on fuel management fraud. This will ensure auditors are better equipped to target areas susceptible to fraud and mismanagement. The Division also continued to make greater use of thematic audits to identify systemic strengths and weaknesses across peace operations. For example, OIOS examined gender mainstreaming and responsiveness across five missions—the Office identified gender-related gaps that needed to be addressed to ensure peacekeeping activities are gender-responsive and effective in advising gender equality and empowerment of women. The audit issued a number of specific recommendations to ensure missions are on track to achieve the targets set out in the Secretary-General's systemwide strategy on gender parity.

In another example, OIOS audited the implementation of mission-wide environmental action plans across six missions. While these missions had made significant progress in the development of mission-wide environmental action plans to manage their footprint and mitigate risks to the ecosystem, OIOS identified, *inter alia*, the need to develop programmes to conserve and manage water resources and improve wastewater infrastructure, as well as improve hazardous and nonhazardous waste management.

The Investigations Division put in place more rigid investigation-completion timeframes, expedited intake procedures, improved and expedited communication with victims, and onboarded specialized sexual harassment investigators. The Division also assumed responsibility for the investigation of all reports of sexual harassment within the Secretariat. In addition, the Division delivered three national investigator officer training courses (in Bangladesh, Uganda, and Uruguay) that covered the

theory and practical skills for establishing a uniform method of investigating possible misconduct, including sexual exploitation and abuse, by military personnel serving under the United Nations flag. The Division, in partnership with the Office of Human Resources, also delivered two courses to train staff to investigate allegations of prohibited conduct as part of a fact-finding panel to address allegations of discrimination, harassment, and abuse of authority. In the period the Division issued 167 reports, including 71 investigation reports, 50 contingent reports, and 46 closure reports. The highest number of reports received during the period were related to sexual exploitation and abuse, with 47 reports issued, constituting 28 percent of all reports issued in 2019.

During the reporting period, the Inspection and Evaluation Division issued two reports related to peace operations, one covering the effectiveness of human rights monitoring, reporting and follow-up in peacekeeping operations, and the other on the contribution of the United Nations in South Sudan to the reduction of local conflict in South Sudan. The Division also issued a triennial review report, as well as an advisory memorandum relating to the activities of the African-Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur in supporting the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. The Division's Entebbe presence was also strengthened through the recruitment of two evaluations officers, as approved by resolution 73/308.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

As a closing note, it should be stressed that OIOS continuously monitors its performance using key indicators, including work plan implementation, and regularly reports to senior management and the Independent Audit Advisory Committee in this respect. I would like to assure you that OIOS continues to hold ourselves accountable for deliverables, in much the same way we contribute to accountability in the Organization.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all OIOS staff for their dedication to the work of OIOS, and for their commitment to the ideals of the United Nations. I would also like to express appreciation to all Member States for your interest in and support for our work, and to Secretariat management and staff for their valuable cooperation in our oversight work. I look forward to the dialogue that this session brings and welcome your questions.

